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# FILM MONTHLY REVIEW

JANUARY, 1950

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## EDITORIAL

**WHEN** a film *publicist* declares that 1949 will be a boom year for the cinema compared to 1950, things do appear serious!

John Ware reports that people who formerly went to the cinema twice a week now go no more than four times a year.

And the manager of a Midlands store selling television sets told him: "Ninety per cent. of the receivers we sell are on the hire-purchase. With every sale, either the wife or husband remarks, 'We'll save the instalments by not going to the cinema.'"

Now London's Empire Theatre

may be attracting patrons with stage shows; but this is not going to be of much help to the thousands of unemployed film workers.

*In our opinion, there is only one solution—the film industry and Alexandra Palace must co-operate fully. Only then will these highly skilled technicians be reabsorbed into film making. Only then will the British people, as a whole, begin to benefit from the great visual medium of television.*

We suggest that Sir William Haley reads Jacqueline Mallet's article in this issue.

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Edited by Robert Hirst

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## THE SCRIPT FROM THE ACTOR'S STANDPOINT

*By David Farrar*

Ex-journalist and author David Farrar—in 1948 he published his autobiography, "No Royal Road"—has had a wide experience of scripts, both on the stage and in films. As a popular actor-manager he toured Britain with plays like Mayer's "The Firebrand" and Temple Thurston's "The Wandering Jew." He took over the Grafton Theatre, Tottenham Court Road, London, at the outbreak of war, but this was blitzed. Since then, he has concentrated on films. During the past few years he has acted in more than 20 pictures, including "Black Narcissus," "Frieda," "Mr. Perrin and Mr. Trail," "The Small Back Room," and "Diamond City."

**F**UNDAMENTALLY, I don't think I'm an argumentative sort of chap; but I have a certain amount of the clear Joad logic in me, so that when people ask me questions, I invariably find myself unable to give a direct answer without being allowed to qualify it; or I have to start by saying "It all depends what you mean by . . .", etc.

Now, for the purposes of this article, I have been asked my opinion on film scripts specifically from an actor's point of view. Mark that—not from the audience's point of view, which I think is the more important thing, but from my point of view.

And yet, after all, the two things are nearly synonymous; if a script pleases me as an actor, but doesn't please you as the audience, it doesn't get anyone very far.

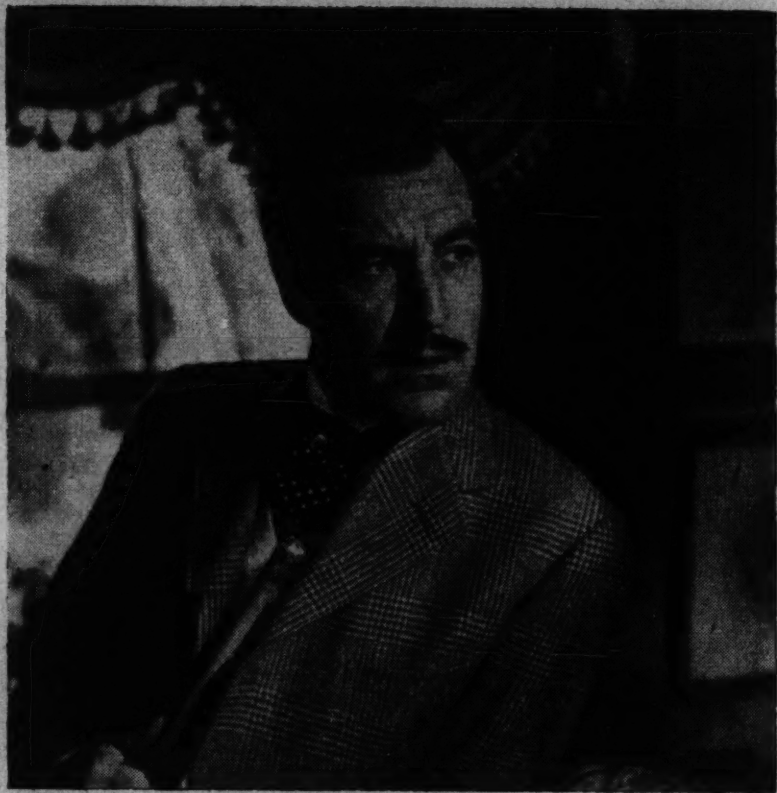
So perhaps the real kernel of the question is, "What constitutes the ideal film script?"

Again, I must hedge a little and say, "What are you talking about? Comedy, drama or the ordinary, everyday, in-between, common or garden sort of subject? Or the farcical or the historical?"

If I said to you, "What constitutes the ideal cake?" you would naturally want to know whether I was referring to plum cake or madeira or what have you.

Well, I'll stop hedging, take a middle course and give what I think is a fairly general recipe for all occasions.

The most important factor, I am convinced, is the story. I am aware that Hollywood has produced a few airy trifles with next to no plot; but entertaining as



David Farrar, in the Archers production, "Gone to Earth."

they have been, they are mere *soufflés* and perhaps the exceptions which prove the rule.

Even though every other department of a production may fail, if you have a good plot with a beginning, a middle and an end, a certain amount of interest will be maintained.

As to what *type* of story, that is largely a matter of personal preference; but one of human interest, dealing in human values, would appear to be nearest to the lives of all of us; and surely a very large percentage of stories must centre around a love interest.

In my opinion, that is one of the two greatest factors in the history and destiny of the world—sex and religion. Cast your mind back over any number of films you can remember, particularly successful ones, and see if love, that greatest of all human passions, was not a major factor in its construction.

### Cutting-room Capers!

Now, naturally, I'm not suggesting that plot is the be-all and end-all of a good script; but I do think it's the most important thing we have to look for.



What next? And here I'm in some considerable difficulty because what is next most important depends entirely upon the type of subject. It may be situation (which again arises out of plot) or it may be dialogue.

Situation may be created either by the very circumstances of the story or by the juxtaposition of certain shots created in the cutting room; but whichever it is, so long as the actor knows in advance, each will give him the opportunity for satisfying creative work, and each will hold the interest and stir the emotions of the audience.

**SO LONG AS THE ACTOR KNOWS IN ADVANCE.** That is important. Of course he can see situations in advance by reading the script, but he can't be certain in advance of what the editor is going to do in the cutting room.

It is the easiest thing in the world to make an actor appear guilty of either under-playing or exaggeration, by merely inserting a shot in a particular place, although during shooting the actor was not aware that this was to be done. Conversely, a good editor, by clever cutting and placing of shots, can make a very ordinary film actor appear practically a genius.

It is almost no exaggeration to say that if you took a shot of someone suffering from indigestion and cut it in at the right psychological moment of situation, you might make him appear to be giving an exquisite performance of suffering the pangs of unrequited love!

That is, in fact, the precise method used in getting animals to "act" in films.

*I suppose if I were a London critic I should not be able to resist the temptation of suggesting that this method should also be used with some of our stars.*

Yes, situation is all-important in a film-script. Give any actor scenes fraught with poignant emotional situations and, even though a single word of dialogue may not be spoken, he will revel in it and so I hope will his audience.

Then we come to dialogue. Now the relative importance of dialogue is again dependent on the kind of story.

It may be one of action or of ideas; if action, then the less dialogue the better; let the camera tell the story since we are working in a visual medium.

If ideas, then it is pretty certain that dialogue will assume a greater importance. If you are screening the work of a chap like Bernard Shaw, dialogue is important because only in rare instances does Mr. Shaw require actors; he would do almost as well with puppets through which to express his ideas.

But, taking as an example a case where dialogue, though not all-important, is obviously called for, what does a good script demand of that dialogue? All sorts of things.

### **"Untrite" Dialogue**

It must, in the first place, be in harmony with the character. You can't make a coffee-stall keeper speak like a university don; but having satisfied that elementary rule, then, within those limits, make the dialogue as original as possible.

Then, because on the screen we are usually telling a story over a considerable period of time (in



about ninety minutes), the dialogue must be as long as necessary, but as short as possible.

Don't let's always resort to the obvious. Even though we may be presenting a slice of life on the screen, let's present it grippingly.

If, for example, we are presenting a simple love scene, let's hear something more original than "Gee honey, I think you're swell." The average person's vocabulary is surprisingly limited, mainly, I think, through mental inertia, but though in actual life

many lovers "stand all abashed and know not what to speak," or whatever the quotation is, that attitude on the screen won't thrill a film audience.

Well I suppose I could go on "nattering" like this for a long time, but I think that I have briefly answered what was asked of me, and I sum it up like this:

Given a good story, poignant situations and "untrite" dialogue, then your director, cameraman and actors would have to be pretty bad to fail to turn out a first-class film.



## STORIES FOR STARS, OR STARS FOR STORIES?

Many people agree with David Farrar. "The play's the thing," they say. "It's the story, the script that counts. The best actor in the world cannot make a play or film good if the material itself is bad."

Here are some differing views on the subject.

**says . . .**

### **. . . Bernard Shaw . . . Roy Vickers**

Do you expect us to write and cast parts on principle? If so, on what principle? But it really does not matter. A competent playwright can write with one eye on a particular player just as on any other of his available materials and resources. Quite a lot of my work has been done *ad hoc* in this way.

Sometimes the personality of a player suggests a part; but in that case the player always objects violently to play it.

*(Short-Story Writer)*

It depends on what you mean by a play. A vehicle for Miss X needlessly disappoints a substantial minority not nervously responsive to her personal charms.

And what about the second successive vehicles, carrying Miss X in an ever-contracting circle?

Set her in a play or film in which the author takes cognisance of her talents but is not

hamstrung by her personality and the circle need not contract.

Such a play or film would be written not *for* a star but *with* a star.

### ... John Sutro (Producer)

Although I think the story is all-important in film making, I would hesitate to condemn the practice of stories being written to suit particular players.

After all, many very successful films have been made that way. *The Seventh Veil*, for instance. It was specially written for Ann Todd and James Mason. The fact that it was designed for these two personalities did not weaken its story value.

But, then, it is impossible to generalise. Nevertheless, I am personally in favour of first finding a good story.

You will find that the main character or characters usually suggest the star or stars to portray them.

### ... George Minter (Producer-Distributor)

Certainly write stories to suit stars—provided that the stories are screenworthy.

The practice is common in Hollywood. Unfortunately, in this country there are few real stars for whom it is worth writing original stories and screenplays.

Another thing—why do so many British actors and actresses consider themselves better authorities on film stories than do the producers, directors and writers?

The circumstance that a player happens to have his (or her) name billed above the title of a film does not necessarily make him (or her) the best judge of a story or script.

## PUT WRITER IN CONTROL

says...

... Richard Winnington

I think we can say that film technique has nearly advanced to the point at which the artist could control his medium wholly and thus bring it into the category of an art.

The missing element is the artist himself, and we will find him not as a director or producer but as a writer who inscribes on paper, with a completely visual power of writing, the thing that will be put down into celluloid by craftsmen.

He will at all points control these craftsmen to the extent that in their individual spheres they are subservient to the film as a whole. Griffith, Chaplin, Eisenstein, Dreyer, Vigo, Renoir, Clair obeyed as far as they could this essential principle. But they were pioneering in an undeveloped medium, and much of their creative purpose was vitiated in technical improvisation and makeshift.

The creator of the grown-up film must see in the cinema his only means of expression, and he must see his material as something far richer than the actual, as something far removed from the literal: the paradox of the cinema is that it is anything but photographic. From "Drawn and Quartered,"

(The Saturn Press, 12s. 6d.)

# Is the Supporting Programme Worth Supporting?

asks

WALTER LASSALLY

"The flow of second features plumbs the very depths of stupidity, sentimentality and shoddiness. We want worthwhile documentaries."

"**ALSO** Full Supporting Programme," says the trailer title at our local cinema announcing next week's attractions. This may mean anything from a second feature which is too old (or too bad) to deserve mention by name, to a couple of delightful cartoons.

## Apathetic Public

Many different types of film go to make up the supporting programme as we know it to-day.

There is the **second feature**, usually about an hour in length; the **featurette**, lasting, on an average, just over the 33 minutes required by law to make it eligible for feature quota; the two-reel and one-reel **shorts**, of which there is a great variety; and, of course, the **news-reel**.

Usually the double-feature programme prevails, in this country as well as in the U.S.A.; but in a number of Continental countries the average programme consists of one feature and a number of shorts, with, or without, a news-reel.

Judging by the quality of the average second feature shown here, this is much the preferable procedure, although it is often

claimed that the public would not tolerate a one-feature programme.

On the other hand, it is also often claimed that the public is nowadays so apathetic, and the cinema-going habit so deeply ingrained, that you can show (or not show) almost anything you like without unduly upsetting attendances.

Apart from one or two interesting American second features, such as *The Window* and *They Live by Night*, both the initial work of new directors later assigned to first-feature production, and both denied a West End showing prior to an outcry by the critics, the flow of second features reaching the local cinemas maintains a steady mediocrity, often, indeed, plumbing the very depths of stupidity, sentimentality and shoddiness.

## Experimental Programmes?

British second features are few and far between, especially since the Rank experiment of making "curtain raisers" at Highbury studios ceased; and those that do emerge are only rarely better than their American counterparts.



In view of the fact that these slipshod second features are preventing much good documentary and shorts material from getting a public showing, there would seem to be a strong case for the experimental institution of the one-feature programme by some independent circuit not bound by long-term agreements with American renters.

As it is, the showing of these films in this country is restricted to the film societies and television.

And what of the featurettes and shorts that do get a showing? The ten-shillings-per-foot labour-cost clause for these films, inserted in the quota act to ensure quality production, has only achieved the very opposite—evasion of the law by some producers. Result: the continued existence of shoddily-made travelogues, and industrial "interest" subjects utterly devoid of interest.

### **No Future for Honesty**

These films suffer from bad direction, poor photography and hurried assembly; they are held together against heavy odds by an overloaded commentary.

At the same time, the more honest producers have been driven out of the market. For current conditions of renting and exhibition make it utterly impossible for a well-made, medium-budget featurette to recoup its costs at the box office, unless it is sponsored directly or indirectly by the Government or an industrial concern.

For the same reason, another field—that of the short-story film, a form eminently suited to the cinematic medium (witness the

many features "expanded" from short-story originals)—has been largely neglected. Here are vast opportunities that cry out for exploration.

### **About Cartoons**

Thus very few, if any, good shorts are seen in the cinemas. Yet there is plenty of potential material available; from Britain, the work of Humphrey Jennings and John Eldridge (whose *Three Dawns to Sydney* did receive a circuit booking supporting *The Third Man*—an excellent, balanced programme); from Sweden, the fascinating shorts of Arne Sucksdorff; from Italy, Luciano Emmer's absorbing films and many more.

Among British one-reelers that are given widespread distribution, the David Hand cartoons are perhaps the most prominent. Getting off to a bad start, incorporating all that is worst in Disney, there have, however, been signs of improvement lately, manifested, for instance, in a charming cartoon, *It's a Lovely Day*, which presents engaging new animal creations and shows a good deal of wit and invention.

Disney himself seems to be on the decline at present, being largely outdone in originality by the *Tom and Jerry* series, at least two of which, *The Cat Concerto* and *The Cat that Hated People*, reach classic proportions.

### **"Magazine" Shorts**

One promising development in recent years is the emergence of British "magazine" shorts on the *March of Time* model.

Both the *March of Time* and *This Modern Age* have given fair and adult consideration to many



a present-day problem, leaving the solution in the hands of the audience, which is as it should be.

Pathé's *Summing Up*, a quarterly issue, has also rendered valuable service in the spirit of its opening title, which says, in effect: "Many varied events flash across our limited field of vision every day; it is only when time has elapsed for consideration that these events can be seen in their proper perspective."

In complete contrast to these lively and interesting films lies the decadent trend of our contemporary news-reels, which, with the exception of the Pathé reel, are smug, repetitive, dull and politically biased.

No wonder the Granada circuit decided to abandon showing them altogether—with no great resultant public outcry.

Not only are controversial subjects avoided like the plague, but factual reporting is often allowed to give way to bias of the worst kind.

### Russia and the Atom Bomb

A recent edition, for example, after dealing with Russia's possession of the atomic bomb as its first item (a compilation of Mexican and Bikini material, of course, plus facetious commentary) ended by showing R.A.F. manoeuvres, terminating in a shot of an airman reading the headline: "RUSSIA HAS THE BOMB."

"What's Russia got to do with all this," asks the commentator.

"Well, you never know!"

This is deplorable from any standpoint.

And must we continue to stomach the unending round of

ship-launching, sporting events, society weddings and royal occasions?

It would be a wonderful experiment for somebody to put on a thoroughly controversial news-reel, just to see if the customers would actually start to smash up the seating in protests, as exhibitors are supposed to fear.

If such vandalism were indeed the result, it would be a sight for sore eyes (for this writer, at least), in view of the appalling and ever-growing apathy of the cinema-going public.

All factors considered, then, there seems to be quite a good case for the abolition of the news-reels and of the double-feature programme, to make room on our screens not only for our own really worthwhile documentary shorts and magazine items, but also for similar products of interest from all over the world.—  
Copyright.

### For Hollywood Awards

It seems safe to predict that Hollywood Academy Awards will go to the following, among others:

Columbia—*Jolson Sings Again*; *All the King's Men*.

20th Century-Fox—*Pinky*; *Twelve O'Clock High*.

Paramount—*The Heiress*; *Samson and Delilah*.

M.G.M.—*Battleground*.

Warner's—*The Hasty Heart*.

Samuel Goldwyn—*My Foolish Heart*.

Screen Plays—*Champion*; *Home of the Brave*.

Film Classics—*Lost Boundaries*.

—Pat Gottlieb, "F.M.R."  
Hollywood correspondent.

# THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE

## HOLLYWOOD

**J**OSEPH M. SCHENCK, president of 20th Century-Fox, plans an expansion into south-of-the-border markets—building and purchasing cinemas, expanding company exchanges, and assessing the possibility of production in those areas.

He will visit every country and key city in South America; his tour will be the most extensive survey ever undertaken in that area by a top industry official.

The Schenck project in South America follows recent advances in the European and Middle East areas; his company recently acquired new cinemas in London and Rome, and plans are going ahead for the construction of four cinemas in Israel, and one in Alexandria, Egypt.

The major studios are now following the example set by the small independent producers; fully rehearsing the cast (without compensation), and having intensive round-table discussions, preparatory to actual shooting.

Warner's had a week of such rehearsals (before *The Glass Menagerie*); and M.G.M. is using the same technique in an endeavour to cut production costs.

### Hollywood Miscasting

The Mary Borden Chase play, "Harvey," which received a Pulitzer prize on Broadway, will be filmed by Universal-International, with James Stewart in the role of Elwood P. Dowd.

From PAT GOTTLIEB

Stewart, back from his Hawaiian honeymoon, is very familiar with the role; he appeared twice on Broadway in the characterisation during its long run there.

### "Toast of New York"

The deal is a participation arrangement; Stewart will receive a percentage of the profits.

My recent New York holiday was highlighted by an evening at the Waldorf Astoria's very impressive Wedgewood Room, where I was entranced by Janet Blair's songs, dances and stage presence. Here is a girl who spent a couple of years in Hollywood, and was considered "through," after being miscast in a series of bad films.

Janet Blair is now the toast of New York.

In Hollywood, her talents were overlooked; the film moguls were concerned only with making her face conform to type.

Example of another very bad Hollywood mistake was Patricia Morrison, who rocks New York back on its heels six evenings and two matinees weekly in her role as Kate, in Cole Porter's Broadway hit show, "Kiss Me, Kate."

Her flair for comedy, her rollicking air, and her beautiful singing voice came as a distinct surprise to me; in none of her Hollywood films had Pat been allowed to sing or be anything else but a sneering siren who never got her man.

James Mason and Ava Gardner will co-star in the new independent Albert Lewin Production, *Pandora and the Flying Dutchman*, to be filmed in Spain and in England, starting April.

The film will be distributed in the western hemisphere by M.G.M., and in the eastern hemisphere by John Woolf's new distribution company in England. We over here hope that James Mason will be content to return to Hollywood after spending spring at home in England.

More about Marlon Brando, young Broadway star now in Hollywood making *The Men*, for Stanley Kramer, independent producer of such hits as *Home of the Brave* and *Champion*.

For his Hollywood debut Brando plays the role of a paraplegic. And to learn what it felt like to be paralysed from the waist down, Brando lived for weeks with "the men" in a ward of the Birmingham Veterans' Hospital in the San Fernando Valley.

He dressed in hospital clothes, and propelled himself about in a wheel chair. On the surface this appears to be just another publicity stunt; but as seen in his previous *The Search*, Fred Zinneman is a very sincere director.

### Surprise Divorces

Another outstanding event in my New York trip: the Sadler's Wells Ballet Company, with Margot Fonteyn and Moira Shearer.

The two divorce suits filed by mature Bette Davis against her third husband, William Grant Sherry, and young Shirley Temple against her husband, John Agar, on charges of cruelty, were

distinct surprises to the movie colony.

### Reviews of New Films

Paramount's *Samson and Delilah* is a bold, spectacular film of the age-old Biblical story.

Victor Mature and Hedy Lamarr are flamboyant and interesting in their star roles, and George Sanders, Angela Lansbury and Henry Wilcoxon are impressive.

Cecil B. DeMille has created a grand, pompous spectacle; Samson pushes over the temple in ruins on himself and the Philistines.

The photography by George Barris is first-rate, and is enhanced by some shots taken in the Holy Land.

Warner's *Beyond the Forest*, in strong, dramatic filmfare, ends a seventeen-year relationship with Bette Davis.

Miss Davis is vivid, evil, and scores as the neurotic Rosa, weary of the small town in which she lives with her doctor husband, Joseph Cotten.

David Brian is colourful as the self-made industrialist at whom Rosa "sets her cap," as the means of escaping her drab life.

The Samuel Goldwyn-R.K.O. release, *My Foolish Heart*, is a sad-romantic story dealing with the war-time illicit love between Susan Hayward, playing a nice girl, and Dana Andrews, playing the soldier who is killed before he could marry the girl.

Bearing his unborn child, she marries the beau of her best friend, and promptly proceeds to make everyone unhappy—herself, her husband, her child and her best friend. A woman's picture; tasteful production, excellent cast.



# YUGOSLAVIA

**SONJA KASTL**, a young

Croatian girl, is the star of a new Yugoslav film, *The Banner*, now showing here.

Director Branko Marjanovic predicts an interesting and brilliant future for her. Not only has she talent and acting ability; she is also the first Yugoslav girl star.

*The Banner*, written for the screen by Joza Horvat, another Croatian, is the second full-length feature film that Jadran Films, of Zagreb, have produced.

In all, Yugoslavia has seven feature films and about five hundred documentaries to her credit.

## Theme—Revolution

The Peoples' Revolution is the theme of the film, as it has been in the past half-dozen other features.

The story is woven around a young ballerina, Maria (Sonja),

who forsakes the easy and peaceful life that her heritage provides, for the difficult and fighting life of a partisan.

Through her sacrifice, however, she finds real appreciation of her art from the common people of her country, her comrades.

Yugoslavia has her own version of Elstree Studios. This is the new town of Kosutnjak, on the outskirts of Belgrade.

Alongside the studios there are several new buildings, erected to deal with the technicalities of film making.

This year Yugoslavia took part in four International Film Festivals, including Edinburgh.

Though a late starter, she is destined to come alongside her neighbouring competitors, and, later, may have a definite influence on world film making.

From M. D. OUGHTON

# SPAIN

From RAYMOND DEL CASTILLO

**THE** only major European film-producing country about which little is known is, for obvious reasons, Spain.

Few, if any, Spanish films are ever shown outside the Iberian Peninsula, and even Latin-American peoples, sharing the same language and the same heritage, have looked askance at Spanish films until quite recently.

## Franco's Propaganda

Until 1936, Spain dominated the production of Spanish-language films, but the tragedy of civil war left her film industry in ruins—her markets gone, the best of her actresses, actors and directors in exile.

The Franco regime encouraged the native film industry, and tried

to win back the lucrative Latin American market; rather unwisely with a series of heavily-loaded propaganda films, among the most notorious being *Sin Novedad en Alcazar*, a paean in praise of the Falange. This caused so much protest that it led to the complete withdrawal of Spanish films from Latin America; and only since the end of the war, as a result of trade compacts, have Spanish films, mostly historical subjects without a breath of propaganda, once more staked a claim to popularity.

Even in Mexico, notoriously "allergic" to the present Spanish Government, a Spanish film, *Locura de Amor*, has just established a new record for length of a run in Mexican cinemas.



Although the propaganda is now being "played down," the Spanish Government still retains a firm measure of control over the film producers.

In 1948 foreign films were taxed to raise enough money for a subsidy for Spanish producers, and the Government put almost £1,000,000 into 38 films, including a large-scale out-and-out propaganda film called *Mare Nostrum*, which received the largest subsidy.

The most notable Spanish films since the end of the war, though, have been set in the distant past, with no thought of contemporary problems.

*Los Amores de Espronceda*, just after the war, dealt with the highly coloured love-life of a great Spanish poet, Jose Espronceda, with a fine performance by the leading stage and screen actor, Armando Calvo, in the title-role (this actor is somewhat reminiscent of James Mason, and enjoys a similar popularity; he is now working in Mexico and reports have it that Hollywood would like to use his services).

### About Shakespeare

Another big success was Juan de Orduna's *Un Drama Nuevo*, a film built around William Shakespeare and his company of players at the Globe Theatre. Jesus Tordesillas gives a fine impersonation of Shakespeare, and the beautiful Polish-Italian actress, Irasema Dilian, makes a beautiful heroine who, desiring to act in the days before women were allowed on the stage, runs away to London and disguises herself as a boy-player.

About the same time another Spanish producer flung millions of pesetas into a lavish and over-

long film of Cervantes famous story of *Don Quixote*. Unfortunately the episodic nature of the original story has somewhat hampered the producer. He was obviously out to make an "epic," both in cost and running time, and the film often goes beyond the point of dullness and becomes a positive bore. However, one or two of the cast manage to struggle against the script and direction and give entertaining performances, notably Juan Calvo as Sancho Panza (played, if you remember, by George Robey in the English version of the story produced in France many years ago).

### Best Catholic Film

The biggest Spanish film of 1949 is a religious film, "*La Mies es Mucha*," which has just been awarded a prize by the Church as the best Catholic film of the year. The film has only recently had its premiere, but the praise of the critics has been lavish in hailing it as one of the best of the religious films the screen has produced recently, for it deals with the tribulations of Father Santiago when he goes out to India to take charge of a Catholic mission.

At the moment there is a great deal of activity in the studios, and a number of foreign stars have been imported including the beautiful Adriana Bennetti, the lovely heroine of *Four Steps in the Clouds*, and the Portuguese actor, Virgilio Teixeira, who went straight from appearing in Carol Reed's *The Third Man*, to co-starring with Imperio Argentina, one of the finest of all flamenco singers.

Miss Argentina took her name from her own country, and some time ago went back to Buenos

Aires to make films, but Sono Film, to whom she was under contract, could not find an established Argentinian star who would appear with her, and finally had to bring in a Spanish actor. It appears that ideological differences have now forced her back to Spain, where she is widely popular for her singing.

### **British Units in Spain?**

There are reports, too, that a British company is to make some films in Spanish studios (as a

change from Italy?), but nothing has come of this as yet. Meantime, representatives of the producers are visiting many countries in an effort to get their films distributed. For Spain in line with most of the rest of the world is anxious to increase the exports of her films as a way of raising much-needed foreign exchange, and to open up markets for other goods, trade always following the path of the film, as both Hollywood and Britain have so often pointed out.



*Peter Noble*

"Bankrupt, the great actor-director told the judge that he possessed only eight dollars . . ."

# STROHEIM—

*Artist with a Difference*

by

Peter Noble

Mr. Noble, the well-known editor of "The British Film Year-book," is the author of many books on various aspects of the cinema, including "Bette Davis" and "The Negro in Films." His latest book is "Hollywood Scapegoat," the authorised biography of Erich von Stroheim.

**ERICH VON STROHEIM** recently celebrated thirty-five years of film acting. He entered films in Hollywood in 1914, when he played no less than six Negro roles in D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation*.

Ten years later he was one of the most famous directors in the history of the cinema; but by 1930 he was "finished."

He returned as a powerful actor in early sound films, but again his Hollywood career came to an end in 1936; he had not appeared in a picture for two years.

Suddenly, out of the blue, came an offer from France; and by the end of 1937, Stroheim was established in Paris as one of the biggest box-office names in the French cinema.

## Why Did He Fall?

To-day he is still a great international star. He recently returned to Hollywood for Paramount's *Sunset Boulevard*, the story of Hollywood in the silent days.

But his home is in Paris, where

he is still treated as a great man of the cinema.

How did this Austrian ex-officer become one of the most celebrated figures in film history? Where did he come from? How did he get to the top? And why did he fall from grace?

His story is a fascinating one. It spans forty years. For it was forty years ago that the young Austrian arrived in the U.S.A., a penniless immigrant, along with thousands of other Europeans seeking fame and fortune in the Land of Opportunity.

## Man of Many Parts

Between 1909 and 1914, Stroheim did many things. He was a translator, a labourer, a cavalry teacher in a U.S. regiment, a boatman, a playwright, a stage actor, a magazine salesman and a singer in a German-style beer garden.

After five years of wandering all over the U.S.A., he found himself in Los Angeles just at the time the "new-fangled movies" were making their headquarters in disused barns or



vacant lots in a suburb of the city called Hollywood.

The ex-soldier (he had spent eight years in the Austrian army) decided to become a film actor; and after hanging about in the extras' compound for several weeks he managed to get into *The Birth of a Nation*, characteristically making his debut in one of the most remarkable films ever made.

D. W. Griffith liked the young Austrian, and employed him as one of his assistants on *Intolerance*, and also as technical adviser on *Hearts of the World*.

In this, as in several other war-time propaganda films, Stroheim distinguished himself in roles of brutal Hun officers, and by the end of the war he found himself with quite a reputation as a screen villain.

He could have obtained featured parts with most studios, but his aim was higher than that. He wanted to direct.

### Star, Writer, Director

Accordingly, he began to bombard the studios with scripts and stories, finally getting "*Blind Husbands*," an original screen play, accepted by Universal.

Stroheim went to see Carl Laemmle, head of Universal, about the script; after a seven-hour conference he emerged from Laemmle's office with a contract as star, writer and director!

*Blind Husbands*, his first film, made in 1918, was a great success. An adult story of seduction, it brought a polish to the American triangle drama which had previously been lacking.

Along with Lubitsch, Stroheim contributed a much-needed Continental sophistication and treatment to American movies.

With *Foolish Wives*, the "first

million-dollar epic," "Von" established himself as one of the most brilliant and discussed personalities in the film industry.

Newspapers attacked his lack of morals; he quarrelled often with his producer.

He was a meticulous and painstaking director and was labelled "difficult"—but he obtained results.

*Merry Go Round* was followed by *Greed*, one of the truly great films of all time. Stroheim revealed his ability to make a film of a moving and sordid subject, as well as being a master of gay, sophisticated and romantic comedies.

He was acclaimed one of the ten greatest directors in the world. *Greed* was praised by every critic. So was "Von's" next, *The Merry Widow*.

### Shunned Everywhere

He followed with *The Wedding March* and *Queen Kelly*, but during the production of the latter film, talkies burst upon a startled Hollywood, and *Queen Kelly* was abandoned when only half completed.

For years, the "wiseacres" had predicted Stroheim's downfall. The false stories of his reputed extravagance had spread all over the world. He had made enemies, for he was a forthright personality who could not compromise.

With the collapse of "*Queen Kelly*," he found himself jerked out of the director's chair. No company would employ him. Brilliant though he was, "Von" was destroyed by his reputation. And although he had directed half a dozen films which rank among the greatest pictures ever

*Stroheim as Count Karazin in "Foolish Wives."*



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made anywhere, he was shunned.

Barred from directing, Erich von Stroheim turned to acting; during the next few years he starred in *The Great Gabbo*, in which he gave a magnificent performance, *The Lost Squadron*, *Friends and Lovers*, *As You Desire Me* (opposite Greta Garbo), *Crimson Romance* and *The Crime of Dr. Crespi*.

In 1932 he made one more attempt to direct, but the film, *Walking Down Broadway*, was censored by his producers as "too shocking and too different."

### Reduced to Poverty

Of course it was different—all his films were. But this time he was really "out."

By 1934 Stroheim could get work only in Poverty Row pictures, and by 1935 he could not get work even in these.

Bankrupt, he confessed to the judge that he had only eight dollars to his name.

For a year he worked at M.G.M. as a humble "script-doctor," at the same studio where once he had been a king—the awesome director of "Greed" and "The Merry Widow." He tasted the bitter dregs of humility—but he was not defeated.

Then came France—his salvation. Speaking only a few words of French, the middle-aged actor quitted the film city and exiled himself to Paris.

He starred in *Marthe Richard*, *La Grande Illusion*, *Alibi*, *Gibraltar*, and a score of others. Once more he was respected and sought after.

France had given him a new reputation.

As "Von" himself declared: "In France, if you have ever written a great novel, painted a great picture or directed a great film you are always called 'Master.'"

In Hollywood you're only as good as your last picture. That is why I love Paris; an artist can really breathe in France."

### Longing to Direct Again

Except for a few years during the war when he returned to the U.S.A. (*Five Graves to Cairo*, *North Star*, *So Ends Our Night*, *The Great Flamarion*, etc.), the great artist, now sixty-four, has lived and worked in Europe since 1936.

His latest pictures include *The Dance of Death*, which he himself adapted from Strindberg's play, "Danger Signal" and *Portrait of a Murderer*, in which he plays opposite Arletty and Maria Montez.

In spite of all his successes, Stroheim is still not completely happy. He would love to direct again. He almost did so ten years ago, but the Nazis walked into the Low Countries and his plans were abandoned.

His one ambition is to make a trilogy based on the Fall of the Hapsburgs; and knowing the fabulous career of this fabulous man, I should say that it may easily be possible, so great is his tenacity, so unswerving his determination.

When a writer from "Life" interviewed him on the set at Paramount Studios recently he asked: "How do you feel about your come-back, Mr. von Stroheim?"

"Von" replied (and who can doubt him?): "It is not I—but the movies—who have come back!"

And how right he was.

Erich von Stroheim as the mad ventriloquist in "The Great Gabbo" (1929), his first "sound" film.

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# FILMS OF 1949

by Frances Mullin Clark

IT is always with mixed feelings that one reviews the films of the past year; usually feelings of discouragement, mixed with optimism.

## Best British Films of Year

Several trends emerge clearly, notably a return to healthy comedy in place of pseudo-realism and historical travesties in Britain, and a "new humanity" in films from the States.

On the Continent, Italy still leads in the art of film making; but France, after an indifferent start, will soon be ready to fight for her old supremacy.

In Britain, Ealing Studios, our model production company, has kept up its reputation for a good average output.

Ealing's adroit handling of a trio of comedies was a pleasant surprise this year. This unsuspected talent for humour was displayed in *Passport to Pimlico*; *Kind Hearts and Coronets*; and *Whisky Galore!* But it was conspicuous by its absence in Ealing's latest effort, *A Run for Your Money*, a collection of uncomic clichés about the Welsh, strung together with a few deft touches.

*Whisky Galore!* made on location, had an undeniable aroma of genuine screen humour. The stylised *Kind Hearts and Coronets* held period affectations up to a gentle, but nevertheless ironic, ridicule by going one further in the same direction; while the boisterous *Passport to Pimlico*

gave us a much-needed tonic. Good-humouredly it showed the triumph of the usually helpless small man over bureaucracy, poking fun at the irksome everyday regulations.

Carol Reed's *The Third Man* was one of the best-made films of the year, despite the vaguely unsatisfying lack of depth. This director is an undoubted master of his art.

You feel he cares rather more passionately about how the film is made than what it is made about. He is, at least, an artistic purist.

Edward Dmytryk is a welcome addition to our slender ranks of original film makers; his treatment of *Obsession* and *Give Us This Day* gave solidity to an otherwise lightweight 1949 programme.

*Obsession* is the film of a brilliant director, although it is a pity that his gifts should be spent on such a trivial story; however, by making it credible, Dmytryk showed his exceptional talent.

*Give Us This Day*, made with great sincerity and skill, is almost, but not quite, the film of the year. It is hard to analyse exactly where it falls short; perhaps the horrific over-emphasis of Geremio's death is turned into a grotesque "special effect," thus blunting the tragedy; perhaps the slightly uneven treatment makes the continuity too episodic.

## ... and the Worst

Among the worst films of the  
*continued on page 31*

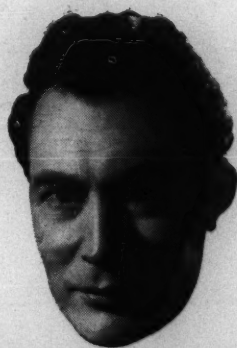
# ***Strictly Pictorial***

*The  
Governor*



*Jack Warner in  
Gainsborough's  
BOYS IN  
BROWN, the film  
about Borstal*

*Patrick Holt as  
Mr. Tigson*



*The  
Housemaster*

*Richard Attenborough  
(Jackie Knowles)*



**"BOYS  
IN  
BROWN"**



*Jimmy Hanley  
(Bill Foster)*



*Dirk Bogarde  
(Alfie Rawlings)*

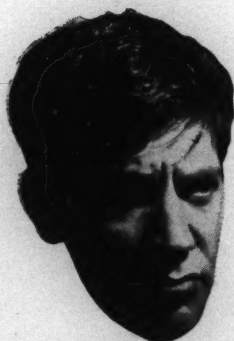




*Andrew Crawford*  
(Casey)



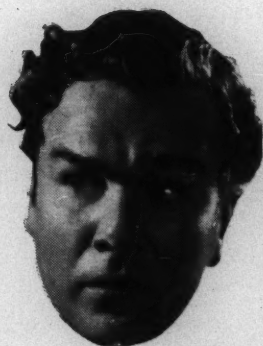
*Michael Medwin*  
(Sparrow)



*Alfie Bass*  
(Basher)



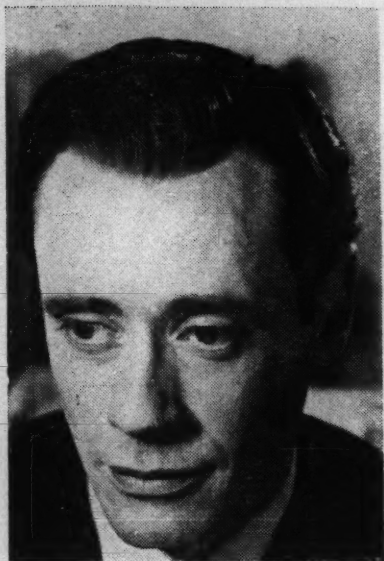
*Graham Payn*  
(Plato)



*John Blythe*  
(Bossy)



*Jimmy Hanley, Mrs. Knowles (Thora Hird) and Kitty (Barbara Murray).*



*Mel Ferrer*  
(Scott Carter)



*Beatrice Pearson*  
(Marcia Carter)

## ***“Lost Boundaries”***

This Film Classics-Louis de Rochemont production tells the true story of a Negro doctor and his wife forced to pass as whites. For 20 years they keep their secret—even from their two children. And then, one day, their white neighbours learn the truth. . . .



*Richard Hylton*  
(Howard Carter)





*Howard discovers that he has negro blood.*



*Susan Douglas  
(Shelley Carter)*



*In Film Classics' NOT WANTED Sally Forest, about to become an unmarried mother, learns that the man responsible, Leo Penn, is no longer interested in her.*



*Sally Forest and  
Keefe Brasselle*



*The famous spanking scene from Renown Pictures' forthcoming British comedy, "Her Favourite Husband." Film has been laid up because the censor objected to the sound made each time Robert Beatty wallops Jean Kent! So the sound track has been altered—but the scene itself remains in the film.*



year was *The Blue Lagoon*, better entitled *A Rhapsody in Recketts*. *Look Before You Love* is a wickedly false interpretation of love life in the British Embassy at Rio; should the Foreign Office take exception to this travesty of its official life abroad, it could hardly be blamed.

It was a pitiful waste of time to take so much trouble in establishing an authentic setting for obviously "phoney" situations.

The Huggett series, culminating in the most horrid of all, *The Huggetts Abroad*, can claim to be a triumph of mediocrity and a toast to the banal. The idea of a family series was good, and there is an abundance of first-class material all around us; but the Huggetts got hopelessly lost between the script and the screen.

### **Anæmia and Debility**

Pictures which, although not specially outstanding, did not have the success they deserved are *It's Not Cricket* and *Marry Me*.

And *Trottie True* and *The Chiltern Hundreds* had more than their quality warranted.

A diagnosis of British film makers reveals spreading anæmia and general debility. Their main fault is trying to squeeze the film medium into the literary form instead of transforming the story into the pictorial terms of the cinema.

America, aware of the harm done by her post-war surfeit of empty stories sent to a suffering Europe, is now willing to experiment with deeper themes—and to her delight, finds they actually step up box-office returns.

Important 1949 contributions to this new era include *Pinky*, *They Live by Night* and *The Quiet One*, not yet seen in Britain.

*Pinky*, although full of as much

social significance as anyone could wish, is a director's picture; and director Elia Kazan is more at home in the theatre than in the studio. *Pinky* is told in terms of the stage; it is not the camera and action which unfold the story, but the dialogue and the manipulation of the players.

### **Flaherty Knows Secret**

The camera, intelligent though uninspired, is used to record, but adds nothing of its own; Kazan could learn from the great Flaherty who knows the secret of transforming the camera into a creative artist in its own right.

*They Live by Night*, better suited to the screen medium, is a beautifully made film of a simple but deeply moving story of escape.

With many of the same qualities, *The Window* has the added suspense of a perfect thriller.

These pictures share a common virtue—the hall-mark of a good film—that of making the spectators care about the characters, which in these stories are not puppets but creatures of flesh and blood.

Always an important item in Hollywood schedules are the musicals. *Easter Parade* and *The Barkleys of Broadway* win the laurels for this year; *A Song is Born* and *Words and Music*—a big booby prize each.

Continental films are experiencing a transition period; post-war realistic studies of topical social conditions are giving way to a more self-conscious study of the box office.

### **Continent—Comedy**

Italy and France, like Britain, have decided that comedy pays best and new production shows a decidedly light-hearted trend.

But British film-goers have not been able to judge this for them-

selves; Continental films shown here in 1949, were all of the previous year's crop.

Two of Zampa's films were exhibited, *Un Americano in Vacanza* and *Angelina*; these, with *To Live in Peace*, still showing in the provinces, makes him the best-known Continental director.

*Un Americano in Vacanza*, his first post-war film, made under appalling difficulties, shows his simple and essentially gentle attitude to life; and *Angelina*, his penetrating sympathy.

#### "Tortured Temperament"

Unlike Zampa, Giuseppe de Santis suffers from a tortured and fiery temperament; his first film *Pursuit* was shown recently at the Academy Cinema. But although this director's potential but undeniable qualities were recognised,

the film unaccountably failed to cause the stir here that it did in New York and Paris.

*Les Amants de Verone* has been the most successful French film of the year. It is a delicate love story overshadowed by baroque decadent settings.

A film rather overlooked during its London showing was *Bagarres*, which had a strange charm, in spite of its unlovable characters. As a study of peasant life, rapacious, avaricious and earthy, it rang true, as did *Goupi Mains Rouges*, similarly ignored.

There we have them—the outstanding films of 1949. Too few good, too many bad. Most of them can be laid to rest without regrets. On the whole a discouraging year.

Let's hope 1950 shows a decided improvement.

## ... And Personalities

by Frances Mullin Clark

**E**VENTS of the year, such as the collapse of Mr. Rank's production interests, have caused some acrobatics in the balance of power within the industry. Independent producers swing into power as the big groups sag downwards.

Among producers spotlighted by 1949 are Rod Geiger, Ronald Neame, and John Sutro in Britain; Darryl Zanuck and Doré Schary in Hollywood; in Rome, Riccardo Gualino; and André Paulvé in Paris.

Geiger first became known in this country through *Paisa*; he then went into battle with *Give Us This Day*; now he is plan-

ning three more pictures, all equally original and bold.

#### Life . . . and Movement

In his own words, "Each story presents elemental problems of the moment, and shows the life of people which can be understood by people everywhere."

Neame, too, has the right ideas about film making, and plans to carry them out on his own now that he has left the renowned Cineguild team. He says that he is "striving after the lost art of making movies; since the invention of sound there is a tendency to forget that the cinema means moving pictures." And he wants more action and less talking.



*Vivi Gioi and Andrea Checchi in "Pursuit."*

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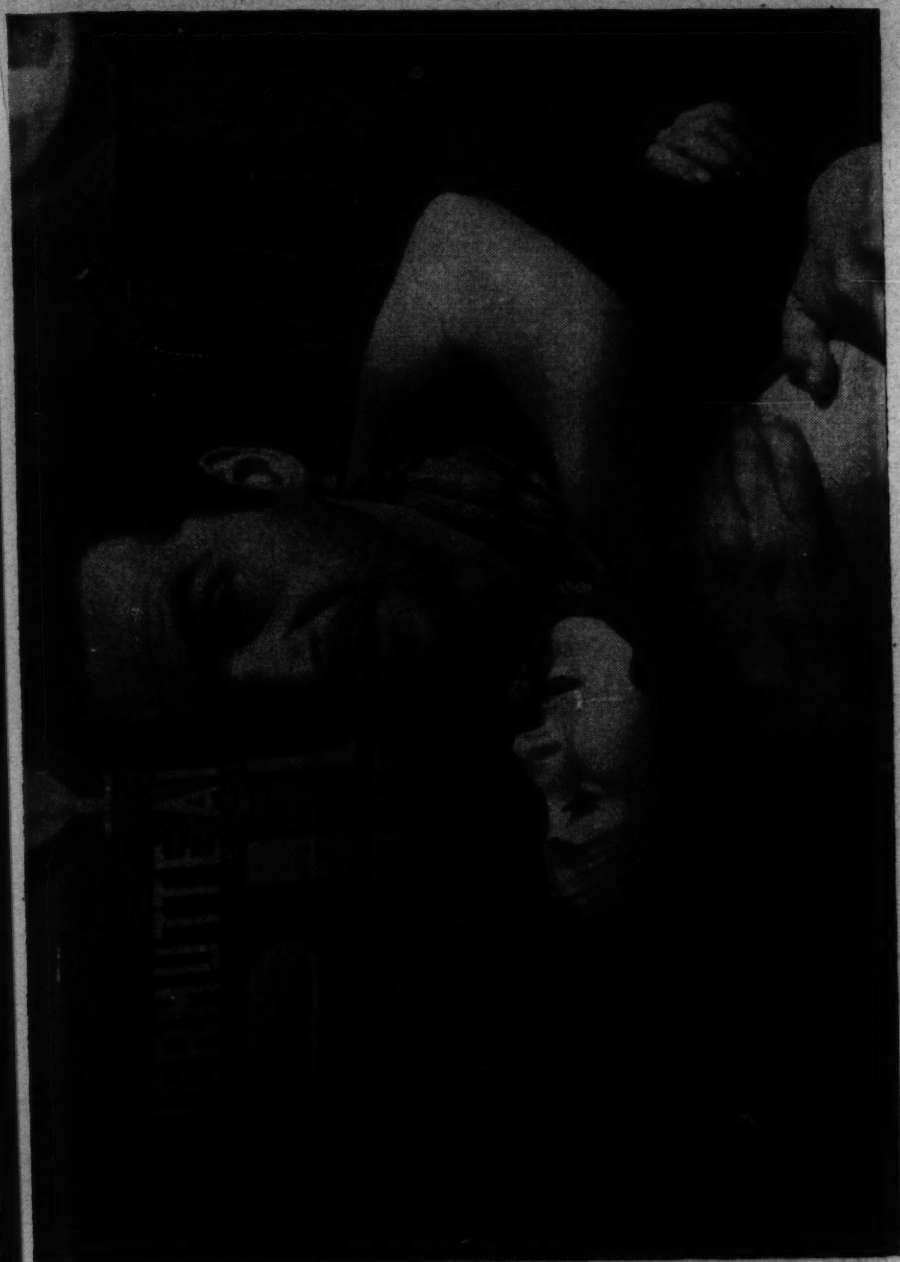
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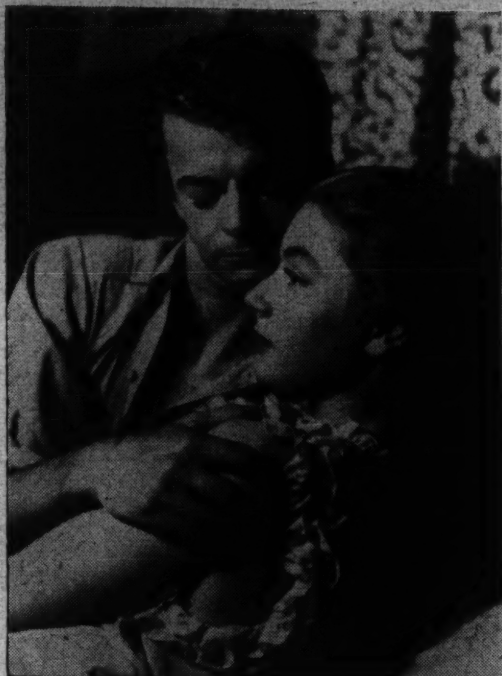




*Vivi Gioi and Andrea Checchi in "Pursuit."*



Anouk and  
Serge Reg-  
giani in "*Les  
Amants de  
Verone.*"



The versatile Sutro, with a genuine international outlook, is embarking on a formidable programme ranging from the Orlux production, *Her Favourite Husband*, to *Gordon of Khartoum*, all with stars, directors and locations of varied nationalities.

Darryl Zanuck, of *Pinky* fame, and Doré Schary, responsible for *The Window* and *They Live by Night*, win special applause from British audiences for their brave attempt to bring serious and artistic films out of the Hollywood froth.

Riccardo Gualino, chief of the progressive Lux Film company, keeps up an unrivalled output of high standard, some we have already seen in Britain—*Angelina*, *To Live in Peace*, *Pursuit*, and *Un Americano in Vacanza*; and many more are on the way.

Best known here of the French producers is André Paulvé, of Discina Films, who for years has been responsible for nearly every important production in France including *Les Maudits*, seen recently in London.

Both Paulvé and Gualino are always ready to experiment and it is due to them that the best Continental talent of today has been given a chance.

### Simmons on Her Throne

A reshuffle in the status of the stars came about too in 1949. The cutting of production expenses will spare us the surfeit of sickening publicity adulation formerly indispensable to stardom.

The path is now cleared for new and genuine talent. Richard Todd and Elizabeth Sellars, both

belonging to Associated British, are very promising newcomers.

Richard Burton and Yvonne Mitchell are the best hopes of London Films.

Jean Simmons alone of the Rank group remains secure on her throne.

With these few exceptions all acting honours, as well as glamour laurels have been carried away by Continental players. Valli in *The Third Man*; Valentina Cortese in *The Glass Mountain*, an otherwise dreary film in which the Italian cast stole everything that there was in the way of ability and charm.

Cortese's native surroundings produced a far better performance from her in *Un Americano in Vacanza*.

*Give Us This Day* introduced Lea Padovani who proved herself a brilliant actress, although

lacking a little in that endearing warmth we have learnt to expect from Italian artistes.

The great Anna Magnani is undisputably the actress of the year; no other performance touched her magnificent portrayal of *Angelina*.

The most dynamic acting seen for a long time came from Vivi Gioi in *Pursuit*. This intense actress plays the part of an evil but tormented woman, who takes her revenge on a life that has denied her the simple things she wants most.

Vivi is already a top star in Italy, where she has acted in twenty-five films since she was discovered by de Sica ten years ago. She is an outstanding personality in Rome intelligentsia circles, and is also admired in society for her dress sense and elegance.



Director Giuseppe de Santis.

France has produced a few new stars of value; the very young Anouk made a considerable impression here.

Her first film, *Les Amants de Verone*, reveals her as an actress of great natural talent. She has a power to convey deep emotion with subtle restraint; her unusual beauty is accentuated by a quality of stillness and an exquisite grace.

### "I feel apprehensive"

Although obviously of a complex temperament, she is touchingly modest. "I do not like to see me on the screen; I feel apprehensive and go to 'rushes' only to hear me speak," she shyly confessed.

The Spanish Maria Casares, who counts as French, has a special filmic personality; vivacious yet elusive and remote. She gave a compelling performance as the seductive Carmelle in *Bagarres*.

Serge Reggiani is the French actor of the year, although we only saw him here as the gay, impudent Angelo, in *Les Amants de Verone*, passionately stirred by the first real love of his care-free life. Although no handsome hero in the accepted sense, he welcomed this romantic part as a change from his glut of smart-guy roles.

Quite different is tall, lean and sardonic Andrea Checchi, Italy's male lead number one. He has been seen in two films here this year—Roberto in *Un Americano in Vacanza*, and, in *Pursuit*, as the desperado, who, in his heart, hates violence and crime.

Directors of the year from Hollywood are Ted Tetzlaff (*The Window*), and Nicholas Ray (*They Live by Night*).

Elia Kazan came to the fore again with *Pinky*, and summed up

for me his attitude to realism: "What need is there for romantic treatment? Life itself is too romantic, too ghastly."

Rossellini fell out of favour after *Germany Year Zero*, and Zampa took his place. But it is de Santis who appears to be the most interesting Continental director of the year.

Very young and vigorous, in *Pursuit* he reveals a true feeling for the cinema, and he also has something to say.

In Britain, Carol Reed reigns supreme as before; but Dmytryk takes top place as personality of the year. Strong and penetrating, to him the cinema means simply "the investigation of subject matter and the making of films about human beings."

With the decline of stars, the importance of screenwriters comes into focus. Britain has two outstandingly original writers—the likeable T. E. B. Clarke, whose *Passport to Pimlico* showed up his highly developed observation and brilliant humorous twist; and the novelist Graham Greene, whose partnership with Carol Reed produced *The Third Man*.

Such is the talent harvest of 1949 from the studios of the world. Each of these personalities has, I feel, enough of that genuine, but all too rare, feeling for the cinema to carry them along for many years to come.

### "Film Sponsor"

Contributors to December issue include the well-known commentator, Peter Watson, Donald Alexander, Alec Bristow, John Shearman, and Paul Nugat, one of "F.M.R.'s" leading contributors for the past three years. (Price 1s. 6d.)



The High Wycombe Film Society enjoy . . .

## AN ADVENTURE ON A SHOE-STRING

By TONY ROSE

THE scene is my living room.

Time: the present. On the mantelpiece a screen has been erected. On the sideboard stands a 16mm. home projector. There are about twenty of us in the room, packed together. Some are sitting on the floor, smoking nervously.

We have assembled to see the first rough-cut of a new film—



*Tony Rose, director and co-author of the High Wycombe Film Society production, "Paper Boat." (Photo: Robert Mead.)*

our film. It is called *Paper Boat* and it has taken us all summer to make, shooting at weekends, arguing, amending the script and cutting in the evenings.

We are members of the High Wycombe Film Society—just one of the hundred and twenty or so little-known units that make up Britain's amateur film movement.

Of the millions who visit the cinema each week, no more than a handful will ever see one of our efforts. The vast majority have never even heard of us. But then we are not out to make a fortune; we are simply out to make good films.

One day, perhaps, we shall succeed in making one good enough to command general attention. Meantime it is fine trying.

### Expensive Raw Materials

By professional standards, the bulk of our pictures are not very impressive. But the grounds for comparison are slight. For the cinema, almost alone among the arts, depends heavily on expensive raw materials.

The painter whether he is working for a commission or for the sheer love of painting spends about the same amount on canvas and brushes. Not so the film maker.

Despite economy drives, independent frames and what have you, the cost of a professional first feature still hovers between £100,000 and £150,000.

Even the most wealthy of amateur units can seldom afford more than £100. Usually the cost is far less.

### Overspent by £1

We undertook to make "Paper Boat," which runs for 35 minutes on a budget of £35; in a fit of wild extravagance, we overspent by £1.

All of which means that the amateur can only hope to succeed within fairly narrow limits. The cost of film stock limits the length of our pictures.

The cost of sound-on-film recording is such that most of us forgo dialogue and make do with music recorded on discs.

*In other words we must tell our stories quickly and tell them, so far as possible, in visual terms. Which is not a bad thing since it forces us to concentrate on movement—still the first essential of a good movie.*

The script of *Paper Boat*, then, was written with the idea of telling a story in about half an hour without speech or sub-titles but with music to help convey mood.

Since we had no studio to work in, we set out to exploit our greatest asset—the countryside around our home town.

The story was written around, in fact almost inspired by, a stretch of the Thames between Cookham and Marlow. The plot is necessarily simple. Briefly, this is it:

Six young men cycle out from an industrial town to spend a day on the river. The boat they hire will only hold five and one has to stay behind.

He meets a young married woman whose husband has gone out fishing with a friend. A thunderstorm forces them to take shelter together.

They fall in love. When evening comes the young man cycles back to the town and the young woman returns to her husband.

On this frail structure we have tried to build up a film that will convey the transient beauty of a day on the river. We have kept plot to a minimum in the belief that the silent film is best suited to the portrayal of moods.

First there is the exuberance of the early morning as the cyclists leave the town behind them and get out into the countryside.

Then a quiet, idyllic period, followed by the climax of the thunderstorm and the human emotions which it reflects.

Finally the dying away, nostalgic quality of a summer evening.

### Capturing Changing Moods

As an insider, still very pre-occupied with the details of production, I honestly can't say whether we have succeeded in capturing these changing moods.

But at least I am pretty sure we have made a picture that will please the eye. And we have had a lot of fun doing it.

Nearly all of our £36 has gone

on the film stock itself and on photofloods for lighting the interiors. The camera is the private property of the cameraman; he bought it second-hand for £17 10s.

Since it is impossible to change focus with this camera, the deep-focus photography which was such a highly publicised feature of the film *Hamlet* is, for us, a matter of plain necessity.

The normal lens takes in everything from five feet to infinity, and when we want an extreme close-up, we stick on a special lens with adhesive tape.

All our equipment, including lamp-holders, reflectors and a small wind machine, was manufactured by the assistant cameraman.

For tracking shots we place the cameraman bodily in a perambulator and wheel him around.

Because our members are nearly all technicians or would-be technicians, we recruit most of our actors from outside the society, preferring those who "look right," to those who think they can act.

### Co-operation Everywhere

*We trade ruthlessly on the fact that almost anyone is "intrigued" with the idea of appearing in a film.*

Wherever we go we find that people are astonishingly anxious to help us. One well-wisher gave us the run of his large country house. A local publican let us film in his saloon bar, out of licensing hours. And, believe me,

it is no trifling matter to be invaded by a film unit.

All this for the sake of a film that will never be seen by the general public! The possibility is that we are mad. On the other hand I believe that we have something adventurous, something new to offer—something in fact that the professional industry could do with.

We are not cowed by box-office formulae; we are poor but comparatively honest. Somehow, some day, we all hope to make a film that is really worth while. That is what keeps us going.

### "Sight and Sound"

There is much of interest in the new "Sight and Sound," now published monthly under the progressive editorship of Gavin Lambert.

Mr. Lambert is a genuine lover of film and deplores the so-called critics' "concentration on being facetious at the expense of the mediocre."

December edition contains an interesting account of an interview with Flaherty, by Penelope Houston; Flaherty believes that television will foster the appreciation of good films—by bringing "rubbish" into the home and sending people out for quality entertainment!

Other articles by Paul Rotha, Péter Ustinov, Richard Winnington, John Betjeman, Philip Hope-Wallace, Catherine de la Roche, Frances Mullin Clark. (Price 2s. 6d.)





by **Brian Robins**

*"Film Monthly Review" Studio Reporter*

## **PROSPECTS FOR 1950**

**THIS** year does not present the British film-production industry with the discouraging prospects expected as a sequel to last November's drastic 80 per cent. reduction in the Rank Organisation's shooting programme.

### **Revised Quota?**

Future output of the British studios, after summer, depends on the Government's attitude towards revision, in the spring, of the Quota legislation requiring British cinemas to show at least 40 per cent. of British product in their programmes.

Wardour Street is confident that the President of the Board of Trade will reduce the quota from 40 to about 20 or 15 per cent., as a direct result of the rapid decline in output during the past eighteen months, both from the Rank group of studios, at Denham and Pinewood, and independent producers.

Against this background of a new Government policy towards Anglo-American film relations, the most likely development this year in the studio scene here is threefold.

First, a substantial recession can be expected in the operations of two of the three major British producing groups—the Rank Organisation and London Films.

### **Whither Rank?**

Consistently - diminishing returns at the British box office cannot support or repay expensive productions on a large scale for the home market.

Mr. Rank's ownership of the twelve Denham and Pinewood stages is not likely to be relinquished, but placed at the disposal of British and American independent producers wishing to rent first-class floor space. (At approximately £1,750 per stage per week.)



For the time being, Rank production is to be concentrated at Pinewood, but complete withdrawal of the Rank Organisation from the production field is expected in the spring.

Rank's 1950-1951 programme is likely to provide only for renting and screening—through the the Organisation's own Gaumont-British and Odeon circuits—of other production companies' films.

The second line of development may be in the all-important financial system supporting British production, and the independent units in particular.

Coincident with growing pressure on the Government in Parliament to increase from £5,000,000 to £10,000,000 the money now available on loan to producers from the National Film Finance Corporation, will be the delivery of the case to the Treasury for the "ploughing back" of a high percentage of the annual £40 millions cinema entertainment-tax revenue into the British film-making business.

### Further Subsidy Essential

Both the men who make the films (the British Film Producers' Association), and the men who screen them (the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association) are unanimous that British film making should be subsidised further, either by an entertainment-tax remission, or increased loan resources through the State Film Bank.

There are also several private commercial schemes in the planning—largely from film-distributing firms—which will help the impoverished British producer to find capital for continued production.

But so long as the Chancellor of the Exchequer annually takes

in entertainment tax from every British first-feature film twice as much as its producer receives, the campaigning for lower tax cuts will be the British film makers' chief preoccupation for many months to come.

Third feature of British studios' work in the coming year is likely to be a reversion to modest-budget stories calculated to repay their production cost in British cinemas alone, and made largely by independent producers out-of-doors, somewhat in the manner of the financially hard-hit French production system.

### Increase in TV Films

Except for individual assaults in the "epic" category from American companies with large frozen-dollar reserves to spend here, the "prestige" film making that produced *Hamlet* and *The Red Shoes*—aimed at wider overseas markets—will be banished from British studios for a long time to come.

It is significant that at the moment there are five of the country's twenty-seven studios exclusively devoted to the production of short films for television transmission in the United States.

The small Carlton Hill plant at Maida Vale, London, was the first, and in the past few months the newly opened Paignton Studios in Devon, Viking Studios at Kensington, Marylebone Studios, and the Windsor Studio in London have followed suit.

These pictures, shot at high speed at the rate of one a week from each studio, are not likely to be seen by television viewers in this country; Wardour Street is very hostile towards the B.B.C. and, in fact, towards any suggestion that film makers in Britain should provide the cinema trade's

greatest rival with its raw material.

If these films prove as successful on delivery to American television stations and advertising sponsors as their backers estimate, a huge increase in TV work in our film studios can be expected later this year.

Average budget for these "quickies" is about £2,000; invaluable dollar earners, they sell for much more than their production cost, and American television executives are more impressed with their technical and entertainment quality than with their native TV film material.

### This Year's Production Plans

Now for the studios' detailed shooting plans:

Only four Rank pictures are scheduled. With the completion of the Jean Kent starring vehicle, *The Reluctant Widow*, the Organisation is to centre itself on Pinewood to make *Prelude to Fame* (Guy Rolfe, Kathleen Byron, Kathleen Ryan), by the Independent Frame method. It is the story by Aldous Huxley of a boy musical prodigy.

Other subjects are: *Trio*, a second film collection of Somerset Maugham short stories to be made by Gainsborough producer Sidney Box; *Precious Bane*, the Mary Webb novel (star, Jean Simmons); and another Simmons picture, *Clouded Yellow*, written by producer Ralph Thomas.

### Simmons and Cooper?

The American group, R.K.O.-Radio Pictures, planned earlier this year to make *China Run* (Technicolor), in association with the Rank Organisation at Denham, teaming Jean Simmons and Gary Cooper. If, as previously

stated, no further Rank films will be produced at Denham, this scheme will naturally have to be abandoned.

Anthony Kimmins, who directed *Bonnie Prince Charlie*, is to make for London Films a film written by playwright Peter Blackmore, titled *The Saint Has Lost His Halo*, starring Wilfred Pickles.

American producer David E. Rose is well ahead with plans to star Ingrid Bergman here in his second British picture, which has an Egyptian setting.

American Charles Vidor will direct.

Another story about atomic energy—a comic one this time—called *The Jones Affair* is to be made in England by another American producer, Rod (Give Us This Day) Geiger; Bonar Colleano will star.

### Thomas Hardy Story

Director Edward Dmytryk may make a picture about Robin Hood in Britain this year.

Another British story with an Egyptian setting is *Poison Road* (Eric Portman, Laurence Harvey), which producer John Stafford has been shooting in that country for Associated British.

This group is also making *Happy Now I Go*, at Welwyn studios—Phyllis Calvert's first film since her return this year from Hollywood.

Other Associated British projects are: *The Emperor's Snuff Box*, from a John Dickson Carr story; the Thomas Hardy classic, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, which Thorold Dickinson may direct on location at Dorchester; and screenwriter J. Lee Thompson's screen version of his own successful play about the inventor

of chloroform, *The Human Touch*.

The Associated British Elstree stages are being used by Warner Bros. to shoot *Captain Hornblower, R.N.*, in which Gregory Peck plays the hero of C. S. Forester's novel. A British production crew is shooting the picture both here and in Jamaica.

Veteran Warner Bros. contract director Raoul Walsh—he made *White Heat*—directs.

### Four Films in India

Irene Dunne is expected over here for independent British producer Anatole de Grunwald's first picture in a programme arranged under a recent joint £1,000,000 production deal with United Artists.

Sir Alexander Korda recently

bought the film rights of Daphne du Maurier's novel, *The King's General*, and London Films will shoot this story this year.

John Mills also went into the story-buying market recently, purchasing the rights on Marghanita Laski's book, *Little Boy Lost*, which Mills hopes to make his third independent production.

A British unit is shooting a series of four features in India—the first to be made in Technicolor in that country.

First project is a version of Rumer Godden's novel, *The River*. Unknown British and American artists will be given a "try-out" in the film, directed and produced for Oriental-International Films by the eminent French film-maker, Jean Renoir.

## Film Music

# Record Review

By JOHN HUNTLEY

**A** ZITHER has come and gone.

A clever novelty, which started, as Eric Goldschmidt noted in "Film Monthly Review," as "a model of restraint," has become a craze.

But crazes are the best-known method of killing any new idea. Before the tunes of Anton Karas had time to be considered dispassionately, the story of the Warsaw Concerto had been re-enacted.

The national newspapers carried an account, often hopelessly confused (one paper said the music had been recorded at Denham), of the little man and his instrument; while the Decca presses tried to keep up with the rush to supply copies of the gramophone record.

London, and soon England, was talking about the haunting, elusive melodies that Carol Reed had inserted into *The Third Man*.

### Upsets Film's Balance

This music is an excellent experiment in film sound. It is designed, like the Warsaw Concerto, to make an immediate appeal.

But it assumes that a film is a thing to be seen only once. Go and see *The Third Man* now that you know and are tired of the zither music; it's enough to "drive you up the wall"! It overwhelms the whole picture and throws it completely out of balance.

Anton Karas has given film musicians something to think



about. It is not the music itself that is important, but the possibilities it opens up—the use of smaller orchestras in films, less of the great crashing symphonic stuff we hear so much of, experiments with other solo instruments, chamber orchestras, quartets, and so on.

The “Harry Lime” theme is important because it offers scope for new ideas, not because it is great film music or because it startled the public.

As one old lady said to her friend in the cinema when I saw *The Third Man* at our local: “Dearie, what’s that flippin’ armonica they keep playing all the time”; music directors, beware!

Incidentally, I need hardly tell you that the original recording is on Decca F.9235.

A word of warning: do not waste your money on anything but the sound-track record. Those zither tunes were meant for one instrument only and do not sound pleasant on a dance band, light orchestra and in the hands of anyone except Mr. Karas.

There is a pleasant “Theme Waltz” from *Dark Secret*; it is by George Melachrino, thick with lush strings and harp glissandos. (H.M.V. B.9805.)

If you are interested in gramophone records in themselves, by the way, try to see an edition of *March of Time* called *It’s in the Groove*; it contains scenes of a typical H.M.V. recording session and shows Moura Lympany making a Chopin recording. The film deals with the growth of the gramophone-record industry as a whole.

#### For Your Collection:

Prelude and The Ballet of the Red Shoes (Brian Easdale). The Philharmonia Orchestra, con-

ducted by Muir Mathieson. Columbia DX.1597-98. Interesting music, a fascinating experiment in film production and a very fine recording make these two items an important part of a film-music library.

### THE BRITISH FILM YEAR BOOK, 1949-50

Edited by Peter Noble  
(Skelton Robinson, 21s.)

Everyone actively connected with films doubtless already has a copy of the indefatigable Mr. Noble’s standard reference book. But all who go to the pictures should find “The British Film Yearbook” of great interest.

Apart from comprehensive reference sections on practically every aspect of the British film industry, there are dozens of articles likely to appeal to the general reader.

To name a few—“Films of the Year” (Peter Noble); “Film Comedy” (Sir Michael Balcon); “Writing for the Screen” (Brian Desmond Hurst); “A Summing Up” (James Mason); “Film Music in Britain” (John Huntley); “Shakespeare on the Screen” (Dilys Powell); “The Documentary Film” (Sir Stafford Cripps); “The Actor’s Two Lives” (Herbert Lom); “Screen Acting in Britain and Hollywood” (David Niven); “‘Alex’: A Study of Korda” (Jympson Harman); “Art Has No Rules” (Anatole de Gruenwald); “On the Horizon” (Roger Manvell).

Over 700 pages and 70 illustrations. Excellent value.



## QUITE WRONG, SIR WILLIAM!

*says Jacqueline Mallet*

**WITH** the acquisition of the Shepherd's Bush studios, the tentacles of television have penetrated yet another step into the preserves of the cinema, and several thousands of artistes and technicians who have worked there since the first world war will heave a sigh of regret.

However, it is surely better for the studios to be used for television, thereby finding work for several hundred people on a regular salary, than merely lying idle, as they have been doing for some time.

### Television Technique

The B.B.C., though, will continue in occupation at Alexandra Palace for the time being, and it will be several months before they can put even one of the Shepherd's Bush studios into commission.

Meanwhile, Director-General Sir William Haley of the B.B.C. turns a resolute Nelsonic optic upon the possibilities of any collaboration between the artistic aspects of cinema and television.

He maintains that "Neither the American nor the British film industries have as yet found it possible by established methods to make films economically acceptable television."

Somebody should inform Sir William of the hive of activity now directed upon making films for American television stations.

Hardly a week goes by without a new company being registered

for this purpose, and some of the biggest names in the entertainment world are becoming actively interested.

It is quite true that these small companies do not use "established methods" of film production; instead, they employ television techniques, which is all to the good, as the resulting programme is intended for television.

It is interesting to see that film producers have become television-conscious to the extent of making a film set almost entirely in a television studio.

This is called *The Body Said "No,"* and was recently made at the Nettlefold Studios, with Val Guest directing and Michael Rennie and glamorous American stage star Yolande Donlan in the leading parts.

### Decision Wanted

The story concerns a young lady who sees a murder on her television screen some time after the actual transmission has ended. The B.B.C. is helping to make the backgrounds as authentic as possible, and Philip Dorte, head of the Television Film Department, has paid several visits to the studios.

As every month passes it becomes increasingly evident that television and films have more and more in common, and it now behoves the Television Advisory Committee to arrive at some decision which will react to the mutual advantage of both mediums.

## TOMORROW'S STAR?

by Eric D. Braun

No charm-school nonsense for 21-year-old Brenda Hogan. She has looks, personality and reached the West End stage after a hard training in provincial repertory. Our film industry could well use such talent.

**I**N the "punch-drunk" 'twenties and early 'thirties, Hollywood used to announce yearly the names of a number of young women, chosen more for eye-appeal than for any histrionic ability, who were to be designated "starlets" or "baby stars," with a vague promise of a future "build-up" into fully-fledged stardom.

### Never a Chance to Act!

They were feted, photographed, publicised, but never were they given a chance to learn to act. After "bit" parts in films, they were promptly "dropped" when the next bunch of girls were chosen.

Human nature being what it is, it is disastrous to give to young artistes an exaggerated sense of their own importance. The "starlets" who eventually achieved success were those who would have succeeded anyway, despite the setbacks.

The Rank Company of Youth, for all its high ideals, revealed that it was little better than a British modification of the Hollywood system. Long before they were sufficiently trained, or had proved themselves in any way, young people were given a series of public appearances, and billed as "stars."

A firm grounding in stage and

film work should come before publicity, otherwise any true assessment of the work of this or that artiste will be rendered impossible.

Praise should be restrained until it has been earned, as with Brenda Hogan, who mercifully escaped the "baby star" nonsense; consequently she has been able to concentrate on laying the foundations of a very promising career.

Her work in *Young Wives' Tale*, at the Savoy Theatre, is worthy of very close attention. In the company of such experienced players of screen and stage as Joan Greenwood, Nauntun Wayne, Derek Farr and Joan Haythorne, Brenda Hogan's performance holds its own most admirably.

### Excellent Teamwork

The whole play is, in fact, noteworthy for a teamwork normally quite unusual when several well-known stars get together.

Brenda plays Eve, a romantic adolescent who wrongly supposes herself unattractive to the opposite sex, and for that reason she affects a scornful attitude towards all men.

This is not an easy kind of part to play; it calls for a combination of extreme youth and

*continued on page 48*



*"That didn't happen, Rodney." Eve (Brenda Hogan), remonstrates with Rodney (Naunton Wayne), after he has kissed her in the play, "Young Wives' Tale," at the Savoy Theatre.*

the experience necessary for an insight into the complexities of the character! Any moment Eve could become mawkish or irritating, but Brenda never allows this to happen—in one scene, where she tells a roomful of people that she was followed by a man, she shows a sense of timing that would be admirable even in a veteran.

As the scene progresses, Derek Farr begins to realise that the man who followed her was himself—a funny situation, but one which could be ruined by wrong handling.

Derek Farr says: "Brenda's timing is intuitive, and quite perfect. She could so easily kill my laughs in this scene, but there is never the slightest danger of that."

From one player to another that is a very fine compliment.

In *Young Wives' Tale*, Brenda also understudies Joan Greenwood's long and exacting part of Sabina, the youngest and more emotional of the two wives.

Illness prevented Joan from appearing in one performance, and Brenda had to take over at short notice.

### Grounding in Rep.

Everyone who saw her characterisation agreed that it was excellent. One of the most difficult things in the theatre is to play a part which another actress has made peculiarly her own; the whole company are attuned to the way in which the star interprets the role.

Her film and stage experience to date has been valuable, if unspectacular. Born in Birkenhead in 1928, she began by learning dancing at Liverpool Academy, but soon took to studying dramatics under Sheila Elliott-Clarke.

Her first professional engagement was in repertory at Buckston; she gained further experience of the stage in Oldham.

It was about this time that she obtained her first tiny part in films, playing a rapt young thing listening to the playing of Stewart Granger—or rather, Yehudi Menuhin—in *The Magic Bow*.

Next she was given a good stage part in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, with Kenneth Kent.

### On Cutting-Room Floor!

Although the play did not reach the West End, the experience was invaluable to Brenda—in more ways than one; it was in the same company she met Donald Houston, to whom she was married a year ago.

Incidentally, Donald's career has progressed spectacularly since first they met; his performances in *The Blue Lagoon* and *A Run for Your Money*, single him out as a promising addition to the ranks of young British male stars.

Brenda's next step was to carve a niche for herself as a leading player in modest, but entertaining films, such as *The Fatal Night* and *The Monkey's Paw*—both essays in the macabre—and as a youthful character actress in more ambitious productions like *Noose*, *The Guinea Pig* and *Adam and Evelyn*, with Stewart Granger and Jean Simmons.

She was excited about her part in *Private Angelo*, with Peter Ustinov, but it was cut entirely from the finished film—a form of torment peculiar to motion pictures!

Given the opportunities, I'm convinced that Brenda Hogan will prove of value to the British film industry—as a young film star who can definitely act.



# FILM REVIEWS

## PINKY

*Pinky* is a praiseworthy addition to the current cycle of "significant" films, which includes *Lost Boundaries*, *Crossfire*, *Gentlemen's Agreement*, *Home of the Brave* and *Without Pity*, all dealing with racial problems.

These pictures tell us that discrimination for reasons of race, sex or creed, is wrong, but offer no practical suggestions. The function of the cinema, however, is to present problems, not solve them.

*Pinky* deserves full marks for fair presentation of both sides—you feel sympathy for the whites, afraid of racial extinction by being turned into a nation of half-castes, as well as with the coloured people who through persecution have sunk to the status of untouchables.

And the fear and hate engendered by both races create horrifying and hopeless situations.

Eliza Kazan gives us a varied selection of the sort of indignities that are inflicted upon a negro girl, and he makes them all the more poignant by showing the dignified treatment she receives when mistaken for white. For *Pinky* is the story of an attractive, intelligent coloured girl, whose skin is so fair that it is impossible to detect her racial origin.

During the course of several years she makes a successful career for herself in the north as a white, but, because she falls in love with a doctor, she flees to her home among the negroes in

the south to avoid having to confess her deception.

Jeanne Crain gives an excellent and restrained performance as the unfortunate *Pinky*; her doctor fiancé, William Lundigan, looks and plays the usual, lean, young American of impeccable Nordic origin. Ethel Barrymore is again an elderly eccentric, this time a dying spinster who whimsically leaves her entire estate to her coloured nurse, thereby shaking her fellow Southern white aristocrats to the core.

The best acting of all is contributed by Ethel Waters as the negro grandmother—she added great emotional depth to a film which otherwise would only be rated as highly efficient, although, by comparison with the usual cinema fare these days, outstandingly successful.

## GIGI

(Cameo-Polytechnic)

This picture is not set in a period but *lived* in one—at the turn of the century in Paris. The sets are rooms that people eat and sleep in, and the costumes are clothes which undergo the wear and tear of everyday life.

British and American period films strive, at great cost, after "authenticity," according to the deluge of accompanying publicity; but they emerge with a glossy, chromium-plated finish, complete with zip fasteners and nylons.

*Gigi* reminds us that the French are the greatest masters

in the art of evoking atmosphere.

The photography avoids complicated cross-shadows, slick effects, and routine arty-smartness common to present-day films. And the dialogue is good.

The woman director, Jacqueline Audry, has penetrated to the hearts and minds of her characters. You can almost see the grasping thoughts that turn over in the shrewd brain of Aunt Alicia (Gaby Morlay); and you feel that these same business-like motives in Mamita (Yvonne de Bray) are tempered with a human tolerance.

You can distinguish between the worldliness of Uncle Honoré (Jean Tissier) and nephew Gaston (Franck Villard); the elder, a humorous and frankly selfish *bon-viveur*; the younger, stifled with the narrow round of pleasure-seeking, only comes to life and maturity when he realises the depth of his love for the enchanting Gigi. There is an immense subtlety in character differentiation here.

The contrast is provided by Gigi herself. Young, fresh, unspoilt by her degenerate surroundings, this difficult part is played by Danièle Delorme, a delightful and extremely talented actress who gives complete conviction to a role all too easy to overplay.

Although the tempo is smooth it is at times a trifle slow. The story, by Colette, is well suited to the film medium.

FRANCIS MULLIN CLARK.

### THE SEARCH

This story of displaced children is told with pathos, sentimentality *à la américaine*, and

touches of stark realism. The semi-documentary technique of narration has been used; and to those who by now know the frightful story of D.P. children, the propaganda value, as well as the dramatic tension of the film, is somewhat shallow. But to the uninitiated, the message of this film is immensely important.

A trainload of D.P. children arrives at an U.N.R.R.A. camp in the American zone of Germany and is greeted by uniformed officials headed by Wendell Corey, chief of the camp. A background commentary tells of the complete submission of these wretched children; not a word or a laugh from them; they obey any man in uniform.

Next day they are sorted out. Some are detailed for another camp and driven off in trucks. They fear that they are being taken to gas chambers, and we are shown close-ups of one of the trucks whose exhaust fumes, biting the nostrils of the children, create a complete state of frenzy. The children smash the window, open the door and escape. All but two are found.

It so happens—and here lies the gross sentimentality of the film—that the mother of Carel Marik, one of the escaped boys, begins to search for her son somewhere in Germany.

Carel forms a friendship with a U.S. soldier, Montgomery Clift, who eventually has to return to the States. He returns Carel to the U.N.R.R.A. camp, where Mrs. Marik is continuing her search; mother and son miraculously meet.

It is a great pity and a sign of weakness on the part of the producer that in a film of this sort

he applied the dictum "All's well that ends well." We get the impression that those children who have not found their mothers, and who never will, are rather a nuisance to authorities and the powers which financially support them.

A film of this sort has no right to water down tragedy.

RUDOLPH NASSAUER.

## BICYCLE THIEVES

(Curzon)

Asked what gave him the idea to make this fine film, Vittorio de Sica replied:

"*Bicycle Thieves* was born of a great desire I had to tell a simple and human story. I have simply told the story of the workman Antonio, his wife Maria and their little son Bruno.

"To see is very useful to an artist. Most men do not want to see, because the pain of others troubles them. We artists want to see. Our one aim is to see."

In hungry Rome, an out-of-work labourer desperately needs work. He has a wife and two children. But when offered a job as a billposter, it is stipulated that he uses a bicycle. His bicycle is in pawn. Now his wife pawns the bed-sheets—and redeems the cycle.

Shortly after he begins work, his bicycle is stolen . . .

All the characters, except for one minor role, are played by amateurs.

The French director, Jacques Becker, said of the picture:

"This film represents life itself. It possesses the pulse of

life; it beats like the heart of a man, gravely, harmoniously like the heart of the man who made it."

Although *Bicycle Thieves* is visually the very essence of cinema, I must confess that I, personally, was more than a little disappointed; I do like a story with my films. But perhaps I have been spoiled by seeing too many bad pictures!

De Sica admits that he had no difficulty whatever in directing the child Bruno (Enzo Staiola) whom he had the good fortune to meet quite by chance in the street. While giving de Sica due praise for his perception and, of course, his technical achievements, may I dare suggest that the film owes most of its success to the appeal of this little boy!

## THE CURE FOR LOVE

There is little doubt that Robert Donat, as star, director, producer and co-screenwriter, undertook rather too much work for this film of Walter Greenwood's play.

However, despite some very naïve directing, occasional stilted dialogue and poor scripting, Donat's film was, for me, far more enjoyable than most recent British pictures.

Robert Donat is Sergeant Jack Hardacre; others in the cast: Renee Asherson (Milly), Marjorie Rhodes (Mrs. Hardacre), Charles Victor (Harry, the publican), Thora Hird (Mrs. Dorbell), Dora Bryan (Janey Jenkins), Gladys Henson (Mrs. Jenkins).

I need hardly say that the acting is first class; in particular, I liked Dora Bryan's performance.



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